

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1-15 were subjected to a restriction requirement as well as a specie election.

I. Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has required restriction of claims 1-15 to a single invention under 35 U.S.C. §121 and 372. Claims 1-15 were subjected to a Restriction Requirement as follows:

- Group I: Claims 1-8, and 10-15, drawn to a gene panel and a method of producing a gene panel, classified in class 702, subclass 019;
- Group II: Claim 9, drawn to a method for screening a drug related to hepatic stellate cell activation, classified in class 702, subclass 019.

Applicants hereby provisionally elect claims 1-8, and 10-15, of Group I, without traverse. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to the non-elected subject matter.

II. Election of Species

Upon election of Claims 1-8 of Group I, the Examiner has further required that Applicant make the following specie election for purpose of examination:

- Specie A: It is recognized that claims 5, 12, 13, and 14, limit an expression profile to comprise "at least five kinds of genes," however, for purposes of facilitating search and initial examination, Applicants are required to elect ONE gene from those listed in Tables 1-4.

Applicants hereby provisionally elect, from Specie A, Gene Number 1, listed in Table 1, on page 27 of the specification, without traverse.

Applicants note that upon allowance of a generic claim, applicants will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 C.F.R. § 1.141.

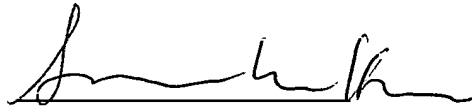
CONCLUSION

Having made the required election, examination on the merits is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner deem that any further action by Applicants' undersigned representative is desirable and/or necessary, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number set forth below.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicants petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 14-0112.

Respectfully submitted,

NATH & ASSOCIATES PLLC



Gary M. Nath
Registration No. 26,965
Susanne M. Hopkins
Registration No. 33,247
Ari G. Zytcer
Registration No. 57,474
Customer No. 20259

Date: October 13, 2006
NATH & ASSOCIATES PLLC
112 South West Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Tel: (703) 548-6284
Fax: (703) 683-8396